

Shenanigans of a bisexual by KLTurner

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: F/F, Fluff, Homophobia, Homophobic Language, I HAD TO DO IT FOR THE MORE REALISTIC WRITING, I promise, Internalized Homophobia, M/M, Madmage, Post-Season/Series 02, Stay Hydrated, anyway reader this one is for you: i love you, byeler in the background, don't stay up too late, dustin is the best boy ever i love him, elmax - Freeform, everyone is ok, focus on positive stuff, forgot to mention, im so sorry, jane is Soft, lucas and max are kinda best bros rather than a couple, max is very gay but not really (spoiler: she bi), take care of yourself, warning, will and jane are like siblings, you'll see why - Freeform

Language: English

Characters: Dustin Henderson, Eleven (Stranger Things), Jim "Chief" Hopper, Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Will Byers

Relationships: Eleven & Jim "Chief" Hopper, Eleven & Mike Wheeler, Eleven/Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Maxine "Max" Mayfield & Lucas Sinclair, Will Byers & Eleven, Will Byers/Mike Wheeler

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Summary:

Africa by Toto plays in the distance, as the party's simple little kid lives lie dead in the woods. In the background, Jane is about to hit her 14th birthday.

1. red-purple-blue fire alarms

“This is a complete fucking disaster”.

Angrily swatting her messy ginger hair out of her face, Max Mayfield balled up another piece of paper and threw it away. Turned out, asking a girl out is not easy at all. Does a silly school dance even require a formal invitation? She had no idea, the boy she went with the last year didn't even actually ask her to the dance. Anyway, she wasn't trying to be formal about it, but rather getting her own thoughts and feelings together, not even for Jane to understand but for herself.

It all must've started just a little while ago, a week before Jane's first official birthday. Or last Christmas. Or maybe this Halloween. Max didn't really know and she didn't feel like the timeline was important here. It all started, most importantly, with Jane being sweet. At first, the two didn't get along: Jane, or El as they sometimes still called her then, felt like she got replaced by Max in their friend group after disappearing for a year. The conflict was quickly resolved though, and Max got an apology and a bunch of skateboard stickers from her for Christmas, which she thought was a bit awkward but definitely very sweet. They have been friends ever since, and even chief Jim Hopper, Jane's adopted dad, was glad his kid was hanging out with another girl and not just a pack of nerdy boys.

What he didn't realize at first was, Max was a nerd too. And which was worse, she was also a rascal, meaning all the things Jane usually did with her friends turned extreme when the ginger was involved. For example, there were regular movie nights with Mike (Jane's closest friend and supposedly boyfriend) and occasionally the others, at Mike's place, carefully scheduled to only happen every 2 weeks or so, as not to disturb the Hoppers' reserved lifestyle, arranged especially so that chief could pick Jane up and bring her home without it looking suspicious. And there were 'movie nights' with Max, the latter simply sneaking past Hopper's alarm system into their house with a whole load of snacks and some movie on a VHS in her backpack, and thank Lord if she had at least called Jane in advance. Jane thought it was unnecessarily risky but liked it anyway. She was

a kid, and the predictable safe way of life she was forced to lead was far too boring. It wasn't her fault they had to keep down for a while, and she missed her friends (especially after she had to stay at home mostly alone for a whole year). Luckily, her dad understood it too and didn't get mad when he heard the girl's secret window knock on yet another peaceful night. About a week before Jane's birthday.

"Hey Mayfield." Hopper said lazily, not even bothering to turn from his evening newspaper. "Careful with the window," he called, hearing the frame being pushed upwards, followed by a muffled thump and the sound of a skateboard being pulled inside.

"Evening, chief!"

"We have a door, y'know. In case you haven't noticed."

Max fixed her hair awkwardly.

"I'll make sure to use it next time." She hesitated for a bit before adding: "I'm not staying over tonight," earning a nod from Jim and sprinting off to Jane's room.

As soon as she heard the shuffle of the bushes and dry leaves crunching under sneaky feet, Jane knew it was Max coming over again. Her ginger friend didn't call that time, but someone else did: Will heard her saying she's going to come when they were in school, so he thought it would be nice to call Jane in case Max forgot to. Will was almost like a brother to her because his mom Joyce and Hopper always hung out together in their free time; also he was Mike's best friend so obviously they were like family. Will's call gave Jane a chance to warn her dad about Max's visit and avoid getting both of them in trouble. So, at the sounds indicating Max being about to invade their cabin, Jane perked up from her book and tensed up a bit. Listening carefully she put it away, then got up excitedly and fixed one of her braids in front of a small mirror she had in her room. She heard her friend climb through the window, the short conversation she had with Hopper, then stomping of her feet outside the door of Jane's room.

"Sup, Dorothy," Max grinned, as Jane opened the door. She always used that name on her when she braided her lengthening hair, and

Jane was confused about it at first, before someone explained the reference to her.

“Hi Max,” she smiled warmly, but then frowned a bit. “You didn’t call. Will told me you’ll come. Call us next time please?”

Her voice was soft and still kind of shy, and Max thought it was because she was a bit ashamed about her grammar or something like that. The other guys told her that Jane didn’t really know many words when they first met her and couldn’t speak like other kids because she was locked up somewhere her whole life. Due to all this Max was really impressed by her progress. And the shyness made Jane seem even cuter, she had to admit.

“Sorry. I will.” She smiled apologetically. “Anyway, I brought snacks and a movie!” Max pushed the taller girl inside softly, closing the door behind them.

That night, they watched an Indiana Jones movie, the raiders of the lost ark one. Jane has already watched no less than two Star Wars movies with the party before, and her favorite character was apparently princess Leia. Every time the woman appeared on screen Jane would bounce in her seat and point at the TV, excitedly whispering “she!!!” That was the most adorable and admittedly most childish reaction to a movie Max has ever seen but she didn’t mind, obviously. Anyway, the girl was already familiar with Harrison Ford’s acting, and Indiana’s character was really close to Han’s. Besides, both were Max’s favorite characters so watching this movie seemed like a perfect idea to her. Jane now had their old TV set in her room after Jim bought a new one, so they piled all the pillows and blankets on her bed, got pre-made popcorn and candy from Max’s backpack and made themselves cozy. The screen went blue for a moment, and with a push of a button, their movie night has started.

At first, Max could say her friend was confused. Apparently, seeing a familiar actor in a different role was pretty frustrating for someone who hasn’t been familiar with cinematography until a few months ago. Jane kept asking “Is he Han?” every time the man showed up after every somewhat long period of not being in the shot. She fiddled with her braided hair, seemingly deep in thought and watched the screen with full attention. Max has seen that movie

several times already, so she was rather fixated on Jane's reactions. They were very important, because what could possibly tell more about someone than their reaction to a film they have never seen before? Bonus points if it's also your favorite. It was somehow nearly vital to her that Jane liked this one. Fortunately, she seemed to.

Over the course of nearly 2 hours of concentrated adventure, the girl grew more and more tired. Her laugh sounded rather sleepy when someone would crack a joke, she has long stopped asking if the man on the screen was Han Solo, lazily grabbed candy almost fell out of her hands. Also after several attempts to get even more comfortable, Max found Jane practically sitting in her lap, head on ginger's shoulder, arms draped over her frame affectionately. When the movie has ended and the credits started crawling up the screen slowly, Jane's eyelids dropped closed, and in this peaceful sleepy state, she was almost impossible to look away from. Or so Max thought, hypnotized by her friend's almost angel-like features for a bare minute, feeling the strongest urge to stroke her hair and kiss her forehead. Then she felt blush creep over her face at the thought and jumped in her seat a bit, quickly pushing it away and jerking Jane awake. She didn't even realize she was holding the girl in her arms as well, and now she was wiping at her eyes and mumbling "I'm resting my eyes" sleepily, and Max can't shake off what she thought about earlier, and Jane is fixing her mussed hair in such a cute way that there are actual code red alarms going off inside Max's messy ginger head with the sound of "WHAT THE FUCK IS THIS WHAT THE FU-" so the only thing she can manage is:

"H-hey, I think it's late now and I need to be home before anyone realizes I'm not..."

"Are you going alone?" Jane's voice sounded worried.

"Yeah." Max nodded. "I'm skating though, so it won't take long."

She zipped up her hoodie and gathered about a half of the rest of their candy and some trash left from what they had eaten. Her hands were shaking a bit when she shoved the stuff into her bag.

"Take care of yourself." Jane said softly, also getting up from her bed and turning off the TV as her smaller friend picked up her board from

where it was discarded on the floor. “Stay safe”

They made eye contact, sharing smiles and bumping their fists (a gesture Max and Lucas specifically taught her a few weeks before), and Max felt an immediate need to run away for a reason she was yet unable to comprehend. Hearing a lazy “The door, Max” from chief Hopper, she waved at Jane and left their cabin. She did use the door this time.

It was dark and quiet outside, the air was crisp and a bit misty. Max stepped over the wire – a part of the trap Jim arranged for their safety – and made her way through the woods. As she was coming closer to the town, she couldn’t help but think about that moment she had. Little did she know it was merely a start of the upcoming storm.

2. happens to the best of us

Summary for the Chapter:

Warnings for this one: mild inner biphobia.

Things are getting interesting.

That night, Jane Hopper didn't feel too peaceful either. She wasn't really fazed by Max's awkward behavior though; she didn't even think it was in any way unusual. Besides, she really almost fell asleep in her arms and 1) it felt nice, 2) she didn't give it a second thought. As soon as the ginger left, Jane peeked her head through the door enough to say "goodnight, Jim", get a "you can call me dad, kid" and a goodnight back from the man and go back to her room. She picked up the leftover candy and put it in a pile on her desk, cleaned up some discarded trash and threw it in the bin.

That night she didn't stay up for a bit more before going to bed, as she did usually. She was too sleepy after the movie and too full with their snacks. Besides, she still felt calm and comfortable after cuddling with Max, so she decided to go straight to bed. It was still nice and warm, and the blanket kinda smelled like Max's hair, which made Jane feel secure and cozy. She didn't know why but she didn't usually bother with reasons: ever since she found actual friends, there has been a lot of physical contact involved.

At first Jane didn't like it, but as soon as she learned to trust them, she realized that there's nothing scary about hugs or hand-holding with people you love. Soon enough, that form of affection has become her favorite. Jane hugged every one of her friends whenever they hung out, and she could say Dustin liked it the most. She even hugged Jonathan whenever she visited the Byers, but not for too long because he wasn't quite used to that yet, and hugging Will was her favorite because he was so small and looked like he needed a hug most of the time. When Mike kissed her for the first time 2 years ago she didn't think it made sense, but when it happened at the Snow Ball for the second time she has already learned about the meaning of the action and enjoyed it ten times more. Jane also learned that there were platonic kisses and that you can hold hands with friends too,

and ever since that time Will got a forehead kiss from her every time they met. At the rare occasions of going somewhere with Nancy, Johnathan and Steve (in any combination) she insisted that the older kids hold both of her hands. No one seemed to mind, it seemed to make her friends happy, and Jane felt happy and loved too.

Untwining her braids and promising herself to brush her curly hair in the morning, Jane switched the lights off and slid under the blankets. The night was quiet; there wasn't any noise in the woods or car alarms going off in the distance. Hopper must've turned his TV off too. The girl sighed softly and closed her eyes, expecting to dream of the adventures of a man in her adopted dad's hat.

However, that night she had a completely different dream.

In her vision, she was in the dark endless space again. Walking on water, trying to reach a silhouette in the distance. She recognized the person immediately: it was Mike Wheeler. Jane's body started slightly shaking with anxiety, because she knew: dreams of this kind didn't just come and go. They meant something is wrong with her loved ones, or at least something important was going on, something that she had to know about. She followed her senses and ran forward, finally getting closer to her friend. He was, as she now could see, trembling with tears.

"Mike?"

No answer. He rarely answered her in her dreams, unless he was asleep too. Jane didn't know what time it was out there, but she was sure it was way past any of their bed times. Meaning Mike was awake late at night, alone and scared. Jane came closer. She could really tell he was scared now, not just sad: he kept clenching his fists, his arms holding on to his knees, hugging them close to his chest. The boy wasn't even wearing pajamas, he was still in his jeans and sweater.

A touch of her hand would make her friend dissolve into the darkness, Jane knew, but she wanted to comfort him so desperately. Anyway, she made an effort to listen carefully and try to figure out what Mike was saying through the tears. He was mumbling something like this:

“How do I tell her?”

“What if it happens again?”

“What if they hurt him?”

Jane was confused and worried. Who did he mean? What did he think was going to happen to them? For all she knew he could be seeing nightmares about Will and the upside down again. That was the only option Jane could think of, but she had a feeling that it wasn't about the nightmares. And that scared her even more.

“I'm here. I understand. Tell me.” She whispered, and Mike's eyes opened and looked up at her. The sadness and slight fear in them was the last thing Jane saw before she lost the sight of her dream.

When she woke up it was already morning. Gloomy white light was breaking through the blinds into her room, making it look almost like one of those black and white photographs Jonathan makes. It must've been kind of early, because Jane could hear the quiet rumbling of the TV in the big room, indicating that Hopper must've been already up but still at home. It was Saturday, so he didn't have to be at the station until 10 am, and he hasn't come to her room to wake her up, so she guessed it was around 9.

Those calculations helped her mind to wake up a little, and that caused her to remember her night vision. Jane knew for sure it wasn't just a bad dream: those happened to her too, but they never took place in the mind space and usually left her feeling worse than now. The girl felt anxiety starting to take over her thoughts. She decided to ask Hopper for permission to call Mike after breakfast. With the quiet lifestyle they were supposed to have, it wasn't safe to use the phone too often, so they agreed to only make short calls. But Jane already talked to Will the day before, so now it would be better for her to ask for permission. Keeps her out of trouble, just in case.

Whacking of her sheets, Jane got out of bed, her feet hitting the carpeted floor. It was colder than before – apparently, the temperature dropped below zero during night. So she found some warm leggings and fuzzy socks, threw on one of Dustin's big hoodies she always wore at home for comfort and made her way to the door.

In the big room it was warmer. The stove was on and Jim was making some french toast – well, he was looking after the pan while trying to dig frozen toaster waffles out of the fridge. Jane smiled and crossed the room trying not to startle him.

“Ah, little miss Hopper! Up already?” Chief turned his head briefly, sending her a smile.

“Yeah. Morning, Jim.” She yawned.

Jane secretly liked when dad called her that, but always made grumpy face when he did. The man must’ve been in a fairly good mood, unlike weekday mornings, and he was about to make her favorite weekend breakfast (Eggs), and that made her feel more confident.

The toast was ready, so Hopper took the pan off the stove and then put the waffles in the toaster. Jane took some dishes from the drawer and set two plates and some cutlery on the table. With the sound of waffles and toast hitting the ceramic surface, their breakfast has started.

“Jim? I need to ask you something.”

She was only half-through her waffles but the uneasy feeling from the dream made her impatient.

“What is it, kid?”

“I want to call Mike. Pretty urgent.”

Hopper frowned.

“Did anything happen? You can tell me if you want.”

Jane fidgeted with her fork a bit, deep in thought. She could tell her dad thought it was about her personal relationship with Mike, but if she said it wasn’t he would be worried that something scary is happening again. There must be a way to tell him about the vision without worrying him.

“I had bad dream. Vision. Not about upside down, but I think Mike is

in trouble. I want to check on him.”

A minute passed in silence, as Jim scratched his chin in thought and Jane stared at him, waiting.

“Okay, but make it quick,” he said finally. “Remember, if it’s a long talk you better ask him over.”

Jane smiled and nodded, getting back to her food. She hoped Mike was free today, because usually the party made plans for the weekends. Although, she was sure he wouldn’t mind coming over, especially if his problem was serious. She had a feeling that it was.

Their little family breakfast was over, and Hopper started getting ready for work, leaving the dishes to Jane. She gathered them from the table and washed up quite quickly. After setting them aside to dry, she wiped her hands on a towel and went to the other side of the room to use the phone. As the girl moved her finger from one number to another on their list, she heard Jim opening the door, so she turned to face him.

“Hey. If it’s anything dangerous, don’t keep it to yourself.” He paused for a second and pointed his finger at her, “And no funny business in here, got it?”

“Yes. Don’t worry.” She smiled.

“Alright, see ya.” The man smiled, waved at her and left.

Jane found the Wheelers’ number, dialed it and waited.

“Hello, Wheelers’ house!” That seemed to be Nancy. It was a bit strange that she was up already, but then again, maybe she had plans for the day.

“Hi, Nancy. It’s Jane.”

“Oh, hi! How are you doing?” Judging by her voice, Mike’s sister was glad to hear her.

“I’m good. Can I talk to Mike, please?” she was getting nervous at this point. Jane was happy to hear Nancy too, especially since she

didn't know how to react if their mom answered the phone, but Hopper said to make it quick and she didn't know what was "quick" in current situation and what wasn't, so it made her feel confused.

"Sure! Wait up, gotta wake him."

Jane sighed and listened closely, hearing Nancy yell "Mike, get up already, Jane's on the phone!" and the sound of his room's door creaking open.

"Jane! Hi. I'm here." He was panting slightly, his voice still a bit rough from sleeping. It meant he ran to pick up the phone, urgent to talk to her. She smiled softly at that, because she was happy to talk to him too.

"Hi, Mike. I want to talk to you about something. I just had this dream, but I think it was real. Vision."

Mike was silent for a moment.

"The upside down?" he asked quietly, and it sounded like he was covering the receiver with his hand.

"I don't know. You were there. Crying. Talking about someone getting hurt."

"...Oh."

"Are you okay?"

"It was real. It's... not about the upside down" Mike seemed to hesitate before saying that. "I don't know if I can tell you that stuff."

"If you want to tell me, come over today. It's long talk."

"Okay. But it has to be a secret. Seriously." He sounded nervous now. Was he really sure she will hate him?

"I understand." She paused for a bit too. "I won't hate you, Mike. Promise."

"I don't know. But thank you. See you later, Jane."

“Bye, Mike.” She said with a smile, and hung up.

Mike didn’t show up until around 2 pm. Jane was feeling pretty calm after talking to him, because now she knew he was physically safe and the whole deal wasn’t about the upside down, which made her sure she can help him. Or at least provide some support and hear him out. After months of hanging out and being closer to her friends, Jane figured out she was good at it.

But before they were supposed to meet, she remembered, she still had some homework to do. Jane was supposed to be homeschooled until the next year when she was going to enter Hawkins highschool, so she had to do a bit of reading, a bit of writing and a test every day and hand her work in to mr. Clarke on Mondays. She usually did those in the morning to spare time in the afternoon, so she tied her hair in a ponytail and returned to her room.

Time passed quickly, as Jane finished taking her grammar test and assigned chapter in the science textbook. She moved on to the mini-essay on Charlie and the Chocolate Factory she just finished reading a couple days before: made a plan for it, stating the aspects she is going to go through in her work and added some key words and special phrases for each paragraph. Then it was suddenly 1 pm and she decided it was time to heat up the cooked potatoes they had left in the fridge for lunch. She was lucky there was also some mustard on the same shelf which was her favorite to go with fries, and it didn’t take her long to prepare enough fried potatoes for herself and for Jim when he comes back from work.

When Jane was almost done with her food, she heard some shuffling outside, followed by Mike’s secret knock, so she put down her fork, fixed her hair and paced to the door. Looking out the window, she saw Mike, who was standing there, bouncing on his feet nervously. The girl opened the door cautiously and peeked out.

“Hello Mike.”

“Hi. Is everything okay?”

“Yes, I’m fine.” Jane opened the door wider and let him in. “You?”

“Debatable.” Mike nodded and helped her close the door behind him. He took off his jacket and hung it on an empty hook by the window.

“Do you want tea or something?” she asked, putting the still warm kettle on the stove. “I have leftover candy.”

“Yeah, thanks.”

Jane sighed and gestured him over to her room. Mike followed her, leaving the door half-open. They sat down on Jane’s bed, facing each other, their knees touching.

“Are you sure you want to talk about it?”

Mike took a breath and nodded.

“Yes.”

He was certainly not really ready for this talk, but he was willing to share his problem with her, so now he just fidgeted awkwardly. Thinking where to start. Finally, Mike broke the silence.

“God, okay. I don’t know how to explain this to you, but it’s Will. He is in trouble.”

Jane perked up immediately, starting to get anxious.

“But it’s not about monster stuff,” reassured Mike, but his face looked sadder now. “The school bullies got worse this year. Yesterday, one of them hit him in the head with a book. With a book! They’re fucking heavy, you know?” His fists clenched unconsciously, and she could see anger in his eyes.

“That’s terrible.” The girl said, shaking her head and watching Mike’s face.

“I know right! He doesn’t deserve that at all, but now that those assholes target him for what he is, I know that he is not the only potential victim. I think...” there were tears in his eyes, and Jane put a comforting hand on his shoulder, “I think I’m at risk too.”

That confused her.

“So... You mean they still pick on him because he’s zombie boy? What do you have to do with this?”

Mike looked her straight in the eye.

“No! No, Jane.” He yelled. “Haven’t you figured out? It’s because he likes boys!”

The kettle in the big room was going off with a whistle. The girl gasped at her friend’s voice. She left for a minute to turn it off, then returned to Mike, finding him staring off at the floor. She sat down beside him again, hugging his scrunched frame.

“I guess he hasn’t told anyone else yet. Not even you. And you know what is the worst about this? For me personally?”

“What?”

Mike sighed and chuckled sadly.

“We are coming to the point where you can start hating me.”

“I said I won’t hate you.”

“I think I like boys too.” He paused, waiting for Jane’s reaction. She was still holding him. “I don’t know how that can be, I’m so fucking confused. I like you a lot and I’ve liked other girls before I think, but sometimes when I see boys in school I think about them the same as I used to think about girls.”

Jane realized she promised him to understand what he was going through, but she didn’t. She just couldn’t get it, why was it important for boys to like girls? It was hard for her to comprehend. Why was Will in trouble for liking boys? Jane liked boys too and no one ever batted an eye on her about that (except Hopper, but that was because he was worried). And right now she was watching her favorite person cry because of this.

“I just want it to end. I want to make up my mind about this already, because Will is going to get hurt for this even more, and he is my best friend okay? I want to know if I should protect myself too, because if anyone knows about me – anyone – I’ll be at risk too. And I won’t be

able to protect him anymore. I'm so scared, Jane."

"But... Why is it like that?" Jane wasn't even sad about this. She was worried about her friends, but she just genuinely didn't understand. "Why do they care who you like? Who will like? It's not important, is it?"

Mike took a shaky breath and lifted his head to face her.

"Do you ever watch the news?"

"...Sometimes?"

"Ask your dad. He will explain it better than I can."

She made a mental note to ask Hopper about this later. But she had to be sneaky, because if anyone knows about the boys, something bad might happen. Jane suddenly remembered she promised to make tea, so she got up again, holding her hand out for Mike. He wiped his face with a sleeve of his sweater, got up and left the room, holding her hand. They sat on the sofa in the big room, and Jane made some herbal tea for Mike – Joyce says it's good for the nerves. She spent another half an hour comforting him and saying she doesn't hate him, and the boy seemed to believe her, but his eyes were still sad. He must've figured out she didn't fully understand what was going on. After the tea was finished, Mike glanced at his watch and realized that if he doesn't hurry up he's gonna be late for lunch, so they kissed goodbye and then he left.

Jane had a lot to think about, and even more to ask Jim later.

Notes for the Chapter:

This shit took me FOREVER and I've been off my meds for weeks and I have no idea what happened to my skills so I just hope this was good. This one was a bit angsty but the next is much better (and there's gonna be some gay action so stay tuned).

Please please tell me what you think guys.

3. the years start coming and they don't stop coming

Summary for the Chapter:

(tw for period typical homophobia here, as i said I
HAD TO DO IT for realistic writing)

Notes for the Chapter:

you thought i was dead? APRIL FOOLS im still
writing

Jane didn't ask Hopper about the gay issue until a couple days later. She figured, it was some risky business, so it was better to be cautious with it, especially if there was any chance her friends could possibly be in danger. It turned out, she didn't really have much to worry about: Jim was ready to explain whatever she asked about.

"Gay", as he explained, was a slang word for "homosexual", which meant people who like people of the same gender. The whole concept used to be kinda hard to understand for her in the past, but as Jane started spending more time with other kids, she slowly wrapped her head around it. So, if a boy likes other boys, he is "homosexual" (Jim said the word "gay" was a bit rude although more commonly used), and girls of the same kind are called "lesbians". She also learned that there are people who don't like exclusively boys or girls, but no one really talks about that except social activists maybe. And also that homosexual people suffer for that. A lot.

They didn't watch the news, but the man made an effort to find a newspaper from several months ago. An article on page 4, barely 3 paragraphs long, said that there were marches of protest in New York, held by "homosexuals, transsexuals and lesbians". Reaction of police. Injuries. 0 people killed.

"That's a lie," Hopper said. "They kill people over this all the time. Not only on protest marches."

Jane was baffled. She knew there were kids at school who made fun of and bullied other kids, who they thought might be "gay". It was

only natural that they must've learned that from their parents, but she never imagined the hate, the problem to be this... Big. Actual human people were seriously being killed on a daily basis by fellow human beings for something as pure and harmless as attraction to others? This wasn't hard for her to process, she knew that many people hated others for being different (wasn't it just the last year when Max's older brother tried to fight Lucas, a 13 year old, because he has different skin?), but it didn't help. She knew now, that her friend – or, possibly, friends – could be in mortal danger and felt like she had to protect them and she had to do it without anyone outside their friend group knowing, too. For now though Jane couldn't do much, so the best option was to wait and try to support them with everything she had, like they did with her before.

Beside the fear for her friends, though, Jane Hopper couldn't help but feel something else after discovering that there was more than one option. The implication that anyone, any girl could like other girls, and also boys, made something click in her mind. She knew, that she won't be able to stop seeing girls as possible love objects now, the same way it happened before, when she found out she could like boys. And that was so thrilling, so exiting to her, that she couldn't get it out of her head for days.

The preparations for Jane's first real birthday party certainly took a lot of time and effort. No one had any idea what birthday celebrations were like in Hawkins lab but everyone supposed that they sucked, so her friends just decided to make this one the best birthday party they could afford without drawing too much attention to the Hoppers. The original plan only included the party organizing the whole thing and Jim distracting the girl while they do it. It's been decided that they're gonna need too much time for that to work perfectly though, and Steve didn't even have to be asked for help, him and Nance already had a plan B in mind. Jonathan would have to drive the kids around anyway, so now there was an entire crew. Mission: Jane Hopper's 14th birthday.

“Okay, let's repeat the whole thing so everyone knows what to do.” Joyce said, leaning over the table hands down on the surface. “Steve, Nancy?”

“First, we make the cake the night before; get all the candles and

enough paper plates and cups for everyone, plus a spare pack.” Nancy listed, and then nodded at Steve.

“I call the cinema and make sure there are tickets left to buy in advance,” he said, reading down the list again to make sure he’s right.

“I check the gas and get all the stuff out of the trunk to fit the presents.” Jonathan chimed in. Everyone nodded.

“What about you guys?” Will’s mom eyed the group of younger kids on the other side of the table.

“We pack our presents and gather at Mike’s before 10am,” Lucas said. “After that we get into Mrs. Byers’ car and Jonathan drives us to the Hopper’s.”

“We pick her up and go to the cinema, where Steve gets our tickets. How much money do we need for food and everything? By us I mean the younglings.” Dustin seemed to be the first to actually ask this question. Somewhere in the corner of the room chief Hopper chuckled.

“What’s so funny? I want to personally invest into this party too.”

“No, it’s a valid question, kid. Why don’t you guys buy the popcorn, soda and candy by the movies?”

Dustin looked at the other party members. Mike shrugged, everyone else nodded.

“Okay.”

Joyce nodded, glad that they have come to a compromise.

“Alright. And while you are on the cinema, me and Hopper,” she turned to look at Jonathan and Nancy pointedly, “and you guys, go to their place and get it ready. What do we have?”

“Christmas lights?” Jonathan suggested.

“Good, what else?”

“We have a blank banner in the attic,” Dustin raised his hand, “should I bring it?”

“Yes, please. Can you leave it in our car before Jonathan drops you off?”

“Totally. I’ll bring some paint too, so you could actually write on it.”

“Excellent. Any ideas from you, kids?”

Mike raised his hand, holding his pointer finger up. Joyce nodded at him.

“Do you have plain lights?” he asked. Will followed him with an explanation immediately:

“Jane gets kinda nervous around bright flashing colors.”

“No problem, we have plenty of that.”

“How much food do we order?” Nancy asked, frowning a bit. Hopper decided to join in again.

“Depends on how much cake we have.”

“It’ll be around 2-3 pieces for each of us.”

“I see.” The man scratched his chin. “Well, I don’t think we’ll be able to consume more than 5 pizzas in one night, so let’s settle on that.”

“Cool.”

Once again, Joyce eyed the little crowd for anyone willing to participate. Looked like everyone knew what they had to do and was ready to proceed, so they decided Lucas will tell Max what they’ll have to do. She couldn’t make it that day due to some family event. After that, everyone said their goodbyes and left.

On 10am, October 20th, the whole party in the Byers’ car, piloted by the tired-looking but cheerful Jonathan, arrived to the Hoppers’ hidden household to start the best party of the decade for their beloved friend. Jane has never been to the movies before, so the kids

picked something they knew she will enjoy. They decided to get tickets for “Back to the Future”. It was going to be very loud though, and that wasn’t good for her, so everyone made sure to get places in the very back.

The second the starting credits appeared on the big screen, Jane gasped: watching TV was a normal experience for her, but this screen was so much larger and brighter than any she has ever seen. The film started, and she got sucked right in: the colors, the music, the action, the jokes – everything about it was great. When Marty started playing his guitar on the rehearsal, Jane swore it was like an entire new universe exploded in her head. She immediately thought “Will probably has this music at home. I hope he will let me borrow it.” It was her first big movie, and though it really was little loud, she didn’t even think about that. She loved every second of it. Sometimes though, Jane would turn her head to see her friends’ reaction, too – it was important for her that all of them enjoyed this party. She was happy to find that everyone’s eyes were glued to the screen, but the biggest delight, she thought, was to see Max’s reactions. The ginger watched every characters’ move with more attention than the rest of the group. Every time Marty did a trick on his board her face would literally light up; she leaned forward, clutching her soda cup a bit tighter. “She is memorizing tricks,” Jane thought, and every time Mayfield did that, it was harder for her to look away. Max being so happy and exited filled her with some fuzzy feeling and multiplied her own happiness by hundreds.

The movie was over sooner than the kids would want it to, leaving them hanging with that promising final scene. Jane was completely mesmerized, and after they walked out of the room she could literally start screaming, but thought that if she did, she would blow up the entire building. She felt so overwhelmingly good. Of course, she never had a birthday party before (she didn’t even know she could), but she doubted anyone’s party was better than this. Ever. The parties she has seen in the movies before were nothing compared to this, in her opinion.

All the way to Jonathan’s car and back to Hoppers’ house in the woods, the whole group was yelling over each other, discussing the movie. Lucas couldn’t shut up about the Chuck Berry easter egg in

the school dance episode while Jane was asking Will about the rock-n-roll music; Max and Mike argued about the events that should happen in the sequel and how the future is going to look. Meanwhile, Dustin insisted that Will looked exactly like a smaller Michal J Fox, and if he lost his bowlcut he would look like the actor's twin in a couple years. Mike mumbled something like "I like his bowlcut", and Jane smiled at that. She was so incredibly happy and overwhelmed with love for her friends at that moment. And the party wasn't even close to being over yet.

Notes for the Chapter:

oof i hope you liked this scrambled update lmao. there has been so much happening lately, but i made it! (if any of you were alive in the 80s or know what the society looked like let me know if i made any chronological mistakes)

Author's Note:

Please please please leave a comment if you enjoyed my thing. I really need to know if I'm doing this right. Love you all!